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Scott Smith Announces Building a Better Mesa: First Tasks

MESA - Scott Smith, candidate for Mayor of Mesa, has recently released his plan for making Mesa a great city. Entitled "Building a Better Mesa," Smith's plan includes a comprehensive program for meeting Mesa's challenges and taking advantage of opportunities. Building a Better Mesa is a forward looking program that focuses on how solving immediate problems and realizing opportunities today greatly affect how Mesa will look as we move forward.

The Building a Better Mesa plan includes certain initiatives that Smith will begin implementing immediately upon taking office. Smith said, "The new City Council takes office on Tuesday, June 2nd. I plan to begin work on Building a Better Mesa first thing Wednesday, June 3rd. We hope to put into action many of the most important items during calendar 2008. Building a Better Mesa includes short-term and long-term action items. All of them are important, but there are some that can be fully implemented within the first six months of our term." Ten of these "First Task" items are as follows:

1. Approve the top-end Balanced Budget as presented to current City Council to satisfy legal requirements. Begin immediately thereafter to review each function, department, or area for change or adjustment. Challenge managers to lower real costs by a minimum of .25% while assuming no changes in staffing. This is designed to have managers focus on reducing non-personnel costs and improving the efficiency in processes. Meeting this goal could result in savings of between \$2 and \$5 million per year. Time period: June-July 2008, ongoing process throughout the year.
2. Formally review and revise as necessary the proposed \$400 million bond package. We fully expect there will be reductions and changes in the proposal. Time period: June-July 2008.

3. Meet as a City Council to formally establish Strategic Initiatives stating priorities and overall plans for the year. Decisions and direction during the year based on these approved Strategic Initiatives. Time period: September-October 2008.
4. Meet the effects of illegal immigration head on. Set a clear policy for Mesa on illegal immigration. Meet with leaders of law enforcement, businesses, social service, government, community and religious groups, Hispanic groups, and others to discuss immigration issues. Specific topics will include community policing to weed out drop houses and human trafficking and addressing day laborers. September-December 2008.
5. Reconvene the Financing the Future 2025 Citizens Committee to review and update its original report. Committee meetings to be formal and televised. Time period: September-December 2008.
6. Meet with regional leaders from Pinal County, Apache Junction, Queen Creek, Gilbert, Florence, Maricopa County, State of Arizona and any others to discuss a common overall vision of Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Airport and Superstition Vistas and their importance to the East Valley. Issue a formal statement or agreement on the common vision that will serve as a guide to regional cooperation on the long-term development of the area. Time period: June – November 2008.
7. Work with City Manager to commence a Customer Satisfaction initiative, which will include the surveying of City residents and "customers." Time period: Target commencement in January 2008.
8. Personally meet each and every City employee in every department and location. Time period: June – December 2008.
9. As part of the efficiency initiative, establish Mesa Efficiency Suggestion Awards (MESA), in which a fund of at least \$100,000 will be set-up to reward city employees for suggestions for improving city operations. Cost to city = \$0, as the rewards will be more than offset by the real savings gained. Time period: December 2008.
10. Begin formulating special zoning and development rules for West Mesa to encourage new investment in the area, with special emphasis on the Fiesta Mall/Southern & Alma School area. Also, adopt and execute special zoning and development rules for areas surrounding Phx-Mesa Gateway Airport. Begin Annexation process to bring appropriate property into the City of Mesa tax base to support critical District 6 infrastructure. Time period: September – December 2008.